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SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 11 JOINT FSC-PC: EU AND OSCE MISSIONS TO
GEORGIA COMPLAIN TO RUSSIA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: EU Monitoring Mission head Haber told the joint Forum for Security Cooperation-Permanent Council that the EU was make reasonable progress on its goals of stabilization, normalization, and confidence building in the conflict zones of Georgia. Both Haber and OSCE Conflict Prevention Center head Salber reported that EU cooperation with the smaller OSCE military monitoring mission was good. Both said that their missions need access to both sides of the conflict zone boundaries and will try to arrange this with Russian military representatives. They regretted continuing "incidents" in the region, including the detention of two OSCE observers on February 10 by South Ossetian militia.

¶2. (SBU) In the FSC working groups, Germany and Austria proposed to extend the deadline for submission of Code of Conduct questionnaire responses from April 15 until June 15 in hopes that the update of the questionnaire will be approved shortly. Many delegations supported the idea. End summary.

Monitoring Missions in Georgia

¶3. (SBU) At the February 12 joint FSC-PC meeting, EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) head Hansjoerg Haber urged discussion in the medium to long term of the "architecture" of the international presence in Georgia, noting this would be especially crucial if UNOMIG and the OSCE mission in Georgia cease operations. Haber pledged that the EUMM would remain visible for the foreseeable future (later telling U.S. Charge Scott that Brussels had instructed him to cease further mention of an exit strategy), but said the mission's effectiveness was limited by South Ossetian, Abkhaz, and Russian authorities' lack of cooperation. Haber urged Russia to be more constructive, and to consider reciprocating the January 26 memorandum of understanding between the EUMM and

the Georgian Ministry of Defense. He also called for access to South Ossetia.

¶4. (SBU) OSCE Conflict Prevention Center head Herbert Salber, in a supporting presentation after Haber, highlighted the critical role of the OSCE and the EUMM in strengthening security on the ground. He also called for access to South Ossetia.

¶5. (SBU) Georgia, the UK, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United States echoed these comments, and condemned the February 10 detention of two OSCE military monitoring officers (MMOs) by South Ossetian militia that Salber had mentioned.

Russia Takes the Offensive

¶6. (SBU) Striking with his usual belligerent tone, Russian PermRep Azimov accused the EUMM of failing to "guarantee" Georgia's non-use of force, and argued the Georgia-EU memorandum of understanding was of little use, as it called only for notification of Georgian military movements without imposing restrictions on Georgian actions. Azimov reiterated calls for Georgia to sign binding non-use of force agreements with the "independent republics" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and again urged an embargo on arms for Georgia.

February 10 Incident

¶7. (SBU) Azimov cautioned delegations not to get too "wound up" over the recent detention of two OSCE monitors. Although they had crossed the South Ossetian border illegally and were arrested, once this was explained and "proper formalities observed," they were released. Azimov insinuated further discussion of the February 10 incident would hinder progress in renewing the MMOs' mandate, due to expire February 18.

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Mandate of MMOs Still in Play

¶8. (SBU) Azimov said Russia was willing to consider renewing the MMOs' mandate) but only for the areas adjacent to South Ossetia, and only for the 20 monitors deployed in August, as the original eight "should have gone home" weeks ago. CPC head Salber had earlier called on participating States to extend the MMO mission, noting they still lacked access to both sides of the conflict zone boundaries.

Azimov's Complaints

¶9. (SBU) Azimov complained that Georgia's intervention was like WWII propaganda and that the OSCE was biased and supported "Georgian propaganda." He further objected to the language of Georgian rep Gaprindashvili as too harsh, noting that the OSCE was a diplomatic arena, "not a boxing ring," and called on the Greek CiO to "have a talk with the Georgians and get them to tone down their language."

Russian Basing Plans

¶10. (SBU) Czech ambassador Pocuch, on behalf of the EU, expressed concern over reports of Russia's plans to open a naval base in Abkhazia (Ochamchire) and additional military bases in South Ossetia. Pocuch said new bases would violate Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the spirit of the ceasefire agreements. U.S. Charge Scott had earlier made the same points.

¶11. (SBU) Russian PermRep Azimov retorted that any new facilities would be based on agreements with the relevant independent states and were an aspect of Russia's role as the guarantor of peace and stability in the region. UK ambassador Cliff replied that 55 participating States did not recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and reiterated the EU position that new bases would violate Georgian territorial integrity and the ceasefire agreements.

Code of Conduct Deadline Extension

¶12. (SBU) In the FSC working groups, Germany and Austria proposed to extend the deadline for the submission of responses to the Code of Conduct questionnaire to June 15; the current deadline is April 15 (FSC.DEL/13/09). Germany (Schweizer) explained that a later deadline would not prevent States from using the current questionnaire, but it would allow more time for delegations to agree on the draft update of the questionnaire (FSC.DD/14/08) that has been under negotiation for almost two years. Austria, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Georgia, Ireland, Hungary Portugal,

Sweden, the UK, Denmark, Italy, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Poland support this proposal.

¶13. (SBU) Belarus (Krayushkin) doubted the extension was necessary. One state (Estonia) had already submitted its 2009 information based on the current questionnaire, and Belarus was preparing its own data for submission on April

¶15. Even if the update were approved shortly, Krayushkin recommended, States should have the discretion to answer either version in 2009. Austria (Eischer) noted that the information solicited by the current questionnaire is also required by the update, so any responses already prepared would not go to waste were the update adopted soon.

¶14. (SBU) Russia (Ulyanov) liked the proposal: it had made a similar suggestion earlier. Ulyanov echoed Krayushkin's comment that 2009 should be seen as a transitional year, with States free to respond to either version of the questionnaire should the update be adopted. Ulyanov saw no reason, however, to immediately decide on the extension as he hoped to receive instructions late the week of February 15.

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OSCE Document on SALW

¶15. (SBU) German rep Schweizer, the chair of the Informal Group of Friends of SALW, reminded that the Helsinki Ministerial had requested a review of the OSCE Document on SALW (MC.DEC/11/08). He will call a meeting on this tasking after the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (March 4) and appealed to delegations to raise ideas and recommendations with him for use at a wider discussion. Schweizer will chair a panel at the AIAM on SALW and is preparing a paper to stimulate discussion of the Helsinki tasking.

Next Meeting

¶16. (SBU) The joint FSC-PC meeting on February 18 will feature Russian DFM Grushko discussing "ways and means to improve the European security architecture."

SCOTT